

## Sūrah Mumtahinah

### Central Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

In the previous *sūrahs*, the Hypocrites were asked to break their ties with the People of the Book, in particular the Jews and most of these Hypocrites, as was referred to earlier were from among the People of the Book. In this *sūrah*, Muslims are asked to break their ties from the Idolaters, and the address is specifically directed to those among them who had entered the folds of Islam and had also migrated to Madīnah for the cause of religion, however they had not yet broken the shackles of kinship and brotherhood with the people of Makkah. For this reason, on instances of trial, such weaknesses would emanate from them as were against faith and sincerity. In other words, the subject of uprooting hypocrisy and isolating the Muslims from the rest which is the common subject of all the *musabbiḥāt sūrahs*, is also the subject of this *sūrah*. The only difference is that in this *sūrah*, the direction of address is towards Muslims who did migrate yet the real Abrahamic essence of migration was not yet evident to them. They are reminded of the example set by Abraham (sws): if they want to reap the real blessings of migration, then like Abraham (sws), they too must sever every kind of relationship with their former environment and dedicate themselves fully to God and His Prophet (sws).

### Analysis of the Discourse

Following is an analysis of the *sūrah*'s discourse.

### Verses (1-3)

The *sūrah* begins with a warning sounded to the weak Muslims who after migration had secret ties of friendship with the Idolaters of Makkah even after they had expelled the Prophet (sws) and the Muslims from their land – their only fault being that they had professed faith in God. It is pointed out that these people are not worthy of such ties as they would try all they can to make the Muslims reject faith; furthermore, if family ties at the expense of sincerity with Allah and the Prophet (sws) are established, then such relationships will never be of any use to them in the Hereafter: they shall stand severed in the next world.

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**Verses (4-7)**

A few glimpses of the episode of the Prophet Abraham (sws) are depicted and the addressees are directed to learn a lesson from it. He had proclaimed total acquittal from his nation unless they professed faith in the one and only Allah. In this regard, they are told to hold steadfast to Abraham's prayer which he had often said to persevere in the difficulties of his own migration. Moreover, glad tidings are given to them that it is quite possible that these people, from whom they have been directed to break their ties, would accept Islam in the near future.

**Verses (8-9)**

An explanation of the fact that what has been asked is dissociation with those who had waged war with the Muslims and compelled them and the Prophet (sws) to leave their homes; those who have not done so, should be dealt with justice and in a virtuous way.

**Verses (10-11)**

Certain directives relating to the women who had migrated from Makkah are given: they should only be accepted after they have been examined as regards their faith. If it is proven that they have migrated only for the cause of Islam, only then should they be included in the ranks of the Muslims. It is not lawful for the Muslims to keep idolatrous women in marriage. They should liberate them and mutually exchange the dowers.

**Verse (12)**

The Prophet (sws) has been directed to take a pledge from women who come to him for the cause of Islam and intend to lead their lives purely according to its directives.

**Verse (13)**

At the very end of the *sūrah*, Muslims are warned not to establish friendship with the Jews and the Disbelievers. Both shall meet the same fate: they have been shaken from their very roots.

**Text and Translation****Section I: Verses (1-7)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ  
كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنَّ

كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ (١) إِنْ يَتَّقُوكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتُهُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ (٢) لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ (٣) قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدُّهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْنِكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنْتَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (٤) رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفُ رَحْمَةً رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٥) لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ (٦) عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوْدَّةً وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٧)

In the name of God, the Most-Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

Believers! Do not befriend those who are enemies of Mine and yours; you extend ties of love and friendship to them whereas they have denied the truth that has been revealed to you; they drive out the Messenger and yourselves because you professed faith in God, your Lord – if you set off to fight for My cause, concealing your ties of friendship with them even though I know what you conceal and what you reveal. And whoever of you do this have strayed from the right path. (1)

If they are able to find you, they will become your enemies and will raise their hands and voice against you and will desire that you too become disbelievers. (2)

On the Day of Judgement, neither your kinsfolk nor your progeny shall avail you. On that day, God will separate you. He is fully watching over all your actions. (3)

You have the best example in Abraham and his companions when they said to their people: “We disown you and those which you worship besides God. We renounce you. Enmity and hate has become eternally evident between us until you believe in God only.” Except for the words of Abraham to his father: “I shall implore forgiveness for you although I have no authority from God for you in any way.” – “Our Lord! In You we have put our trust; to You we turn and to You we shall come at last. Lord! Do not make us the targets of evil-doing of these Disbelievers. And our Lord! Forgive us, Lord. Indeed, You are the Mighty, the Wise One.” (4-5)

Indeed, there is a good example in them for you. For those who put expect [to meet] God and [see] the Last Day. And those who evade should know that God is self-sufficient and has all worthy attributes. (6)

It may well be that God will instil friendship between you and your enemies. God is Powerful and is Forgiving and Merciful. (7)

### Explanation

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ (١)

Though the verse addresses Muslims in a general way, it is directed at those among them who even after passing through the phase of migration still held relations with their families among the Idolaters of Quraysh. As long as the Muslims were not directed to wage a general war against the Idolaters, this weakness among such Muslims remained concealed; however, once the Muslims were asked to go after the Idolaters, this weakness started to become evident. These people were not only hesitant in lifting arms against their families and tribes, they also wanted to make the leaders of the Quraysh happy lest these leaders get after their families. Though this attitude of these Muslims was more akin to conciliation with the circumstances than to hypocrisy; they thought that if they continued having good relations with their relatives, this might influence them into accepting Islam. However, the Qur'an regarded this compromise as against the dictates of faith. It told them that the faith they claim requires that they not keep relations with people who are the enemies of God and of their own.

The word عَدُوٌّ is used for both singular and plural entities. It is of the order of فَعُولٌ and in Arabic this order is used for both singular and plural entities – in fact, it does not even distinguish between the masculine and feminine gender.

The words تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ

1. Believers! Do not befriend those who are enemies of Mine and yours; you extend ties of love and friendship to them whereas they have denied the truth that has been revealed to you; they drive out the Messenger and yourselves because you professed faith in God, your Lord – if you set off to fight for My cause, concealing your ties of friendship with them even though I know what you conceal and what you reveal. And whoever of you do this have strayed from the right path.

وَأَيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ are an explanation of what is mentioned above: such Muslims have friendly ties with these Idolaters while the latter are enemies of both God and the Muslims. It is evident from their animosity that they rejected the religion of the Muslims and their Prophet (sws) and they wanted to drive out these Muslims from their homes simply because they professed faith in God.

The style in *تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ* is similar to the style in the verse: *وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ* (and do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction, (2:195)). Such relations are generally established through epistles and letters and various other means. Hence this style is very appropriate to convey these meanings. In due consideration of this style, I have translated the expression as “extending ties of love and friendship”.

The present tense employed in *يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ* is meant to portray the whole scenario before the eyes. It is meant to stir the honour of those who are desirous of having relations with such callous people who had driven out the Prophet (sws) and his Companions (rta) from their homes. They are told that if in spite of this they continue to invite and sustain friendly ties with these Idolaters, then they should assess their own faith because all their anger is on professing faith in God, the Lord of the Muslims. The word *رَبِّكُمْ* (your Lord) is argumentative in nature: when God is the Lord, then He alone is worthy of being professed faith in. If Muslims professed faith in Him, then they only did what was their duty towards a rightful being; however, this attitude of recognizing the truth became a source of anger of these Idolaters.

I have explained the style *أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا* at a number of places. At times, an ellipsis of a governing noun (*mudāf*) occurs before *أَنْ*. If this is unfolded, the discourse would be something to the effect: they are driving you out on the sin or the charge that why did you profess in God, your Lord”. In other words, their greatest virtue and greatest act of acknowledgement of truth has become their greatest sin in the eyes of their enemies.

Consider now the next part of the verse: *وَإِنْتَعَاءَ فِي سَبِيلِ* *إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِ* *وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ*. Our exegetes have not been able to fully grasp the correct grammatical construction of this part. So I will firstly try to point it out. They generally think that there is an ellipses of the answer to the condition found in it, and have tried to determine it from intrinsic indications in the text; however, in my opinion, the answer to both conditions: *إِنْ كُنْتُمْ* and *وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ* is the same viz: *فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ*. The word *تُسِرُّونَ* is an accusative of state from the pronoun of address while the part *وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ* is in the form of a parenthetical sentence.

The whole discourse can be unfolded thus: “If you go out for my cause for *jihād* and to please Me such that you hide the desire of befriending the enemies of God and His Prophet even though I have full knowledge of your inner and outer-selves, then you should remember that those of you who do this will have gone astray.”

The obvious reason for regarding such people going astray is that fighting for the cause of God and trying to earn His pleasure is totally at odds with making friends with the enemies of God and His Prophet (sws). Both these attitudes cannot co-exist in the heart. Had the Almighty had no knowledge of both a person’s inner and outer-selves, it was possible to deceive Him; however, since He is aware of both these facets how can He be deceived. People who are going out while housing these opposing desires in their hearts should remember that they are in fact going out for the cause of Satan and not that of God. SW

این ره که تو میردی به ترکستان است

(This path which you are treading will take you to Turkey [and not to your destination])

Our exegetes have cited an occasion of revelation for this verse: it relates to a certain incident involving Ḥaṭīb ibn Abī Balta‘ah (rta). I have already quoted the opinion of my mentor Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī in the introduction to this *tafsīr* that when our early authorities cite an incident as an occasion of revelation of a particular verse, it does not necessarily mean that that particular incident caused the revelation of a certain verse; its purpose is to inform us that the verse also contains guidance for such incidents. A little deliberation will show that it does not refer to a particular incident; it only alludes to a certain situation. The weakness of human character it points out is not unique; it is the result of a common human weakness or, as I have pointed out earlier, based on a favourable expediency. It will become evident from succeeding verses that this latter aspect is more appropriate to be understood. However, it is only the Almighty, the all-knower and the wise, Who is aware of all expediences. At times, a person forms an opinion out of sincerity; however, concealed in it is a human weakness which he himself is not able to realize. It is on such weaknesses that the Almighty has informed us that all the actions of the vanguard of this *ummah* form an example to be followed by the later people.

إِنْ يَتَّقُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءَ وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ  
تَكْفُرُونَ<sup>2</sup>(٢)

Muslims are being informed that while they are desirous of friendship with such people, the latter's hearts are replete with animosity and hatred for the Muslims. If such people are able to get the better of the Muslims at some place they will not hesitate from harming them by the hand or even by the tongue; they will fully try to convert the Muslims back to their former beliefs. In Sūrah Tawbah, the words used for this attitude are: (٨:٩) وَلَا ذِمَّةَ (٩:٨) (if they prevail against you, they will respect neither promises nor ties of kindred, (9:8)). The implication is that their animosity with the Muslims is en bloc and they are so stern in this that have no regard for any relationship or promise in this matter. So Muslims should not expect any virtue from them; in fact, the correct attitude in these circumstances for the Muslims too is to relinquish every desire of befriending them.

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ<sup>3</sup>(٣)

The word أَرْحَامُ connotes "relationships and kinships". People who give preference to these ties over the requisites of religion should remember that on the Day of Judgement they will be of no benefit to them when it comes. On that Day, the Almighty will create a great gulf between all such relations. At one instance, this alienation is portrayed thus:

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا يُبْصَرُونَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَنِيهِ  
وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ (٧٠: ١٠-١٤)

And no friend shall inquire after his friend [though] they shall be shown to one another. The sinner will long to redeem himself from the torment of that Day by offering his sons, his wife, his brother, his family who remained his shelter and all the people of the earth as ransom and then save himself from it. (70:10-14)

In Sūrah 'Abas, this aspect is discussed thus:

2. If they are able to dominate you, they will become your enemies and even plainly show themselves your enemies, and dash darazi on you and zaban darazi and would desire that you too become disbelievers.

3. On the Day of Judgement, neither your kinsfolk nor your progeny shall avail you. On that day, God will separate you. He is fully watching over all your actions.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (٨٠: ٣٤-٣٦)

On that Day, man will flee from his brother, mother and father, his wife and his sons. (80:34-36)

While addressing such Muslims, they are sounded this warning thus in Sūrah Tawbah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ قُلْ إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٩: ٢٣-٢٤)

Believers! Do not befriend your fathers or your brothers if they choose disbelief in preference to faith. And those who befriend them are the ones who wrong their souls. [O Prophet!] tell them: “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your tribes, the wealth you have acquired, the merchandise you fear may not be sold, and the homes you like, are dearer to you than God, His Prophet and the struggle for His cause, then wait until God makes His Judgement and [keep this in mind that] God does not guide such people who break their promises.” (9:23-24)

In the verse under discussion, the expression *يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ* is so beautifully juxtaposed that it has become an adverb of place for the verbs preceding and succeeding it.

The words *بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ* are another admonition: people should not remain under the misconception that whatever they are trying to conceal will be concealed from the eyes of God too. Nothing is hidden from Him; each and every deed they do is in His knowledge.

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن



شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (٤)

These Muslims are told that in order to receive guidance in this matter they do not have to go far off; their own ancestor Abraham (sws) and his companions have already set an example worthy of following for them. The words قَدْ كَانَتْ show that this example is not something unknown; it is, on the contrary, a well-known fact that they are already aware of. It needs to be understood that the Arabs were proud to be the progeny of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws). They were aware of the traditions of his migration and sacrifice offered. Though with the passage of time, a lot of dust had settled on these traditions and innovations too had distorted them, it was not that they were completely unaware of them as some historians think.

It is evident from the words وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ that Abraham (sws) did not migrate alone; some people of his clan too professed faith in him and migrated along with him.

The words إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ refer to the declaration of acquittal which Abraham (sws) and his companions made before his people. They openly announced their renunciation from their people as well as from the deities they worshipped and rejected their religion; they further declared that after this proclamation of renunciation enmity and hatred has become clear between them and their people until the latter profess faith.

The words وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ are a continuation of this declaration of acquittal: the implication is that till now Abraham (sws) and his companions have shown lenience to their people so that they are able to communicate to them the message of religion; however, since this has now been done in such a conclusive manner that their people are not left with any excuse and they are still adamant on their ill-ways, this declaration is now being sounded to them; from now on, there shall be open enmity between Abraham (sws) and his companions and between their clan until they repent from polytheism and accept the call of monotheism.

Our exegetes generally think that the words إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَا أُسْتَغْفِرُكَ لَكَ

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4. You have the best example in Abraham and his companions when they said to their people: "We disown you and those which you worship besides God. We renounce you. Enmity and hate shall have become eternally evident between us until you believe in God only." Except for the words of Abraham to his father: "I shall implore forgiveness for you although I have no authority from God for you in any way." – "Our Lord! In You we have put our trust; to You we turn and to You we shall come at last."

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are an exception from the worthy example set by Abraham (sws) and his companions. However, in my opinion, they are an exception to the declaration of acquittal. In other words, after this vehement and open declaration of acquittal, if any lenience was shown by Abraham (sws) it was his promise to his father to pray for his forgiveness before God even though he has no authority on behalf of God over his father's matter. The implication being that though God's will always prevails, he will still pray for his father before Him.

The reason for offering this prayer was Abraham's temperament evident from other places of the Qur'ān: he was very compassionate and forbearing. He thought that if he prayed for his father, then this would not be adverse to the declaration of acquittal he had against before all his people and in fact is a natural corollary of the benevolence every son is bound to show to his parents. Till that time he also did not know the extent of his father's enmity with religion; he thought that the real reason for the father's anger was that he as per his own beliefs wanted to save his son from being misguided; however, when it became evident that his father is a die-hard enemy of religion, Abraham (sws) declared his complete acquittal from him.

Through the words وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ Abraham (sws) has also explained the true spirit of monotheism alongside his promise of seeking repentance for his father: the only authority he has is to pray to God to forgive his father; whether he is forgiven or not totally rests with God. Abraham (sws) has no say in this matter. It must be understood here that the prayer of forgiveness for someone is just a recommendation. When a prophet as grand as Abraham (sws) expresses such lack of authority, what to speak of others.

The words رَبَّنَا عَلَيْنِكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ relate to the declaration of acquittal. The part إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ which occurs in between is a parenthetical sentence. At its end, the next words are a part of this declaration and constitute a supplication made by Abraham (sws) and his companions at this precarious moment. At other instances, I have clarified that after such a declaration of acquittal a prophet and his companions necessarily migrate from their people. This phase is indeed very exacting. It is not easy to dissociate one self from a whole nation by declaring one's disgust and eternal enmity for them. For this reason, every messenger resigns himself and his companions to God at the time of migration. A similar prayer was uttered at this time by Moses (sws) and by Muḥammad (sws) also. This prayer expresses the fact that the virtuous of intentions of a person is materialized only after God provides facility and favourable circumstances. For this reason, every step should be taken by seeking His help. Only those succeed in the trials of God

whose hearts are always inclined towards Him, and who have the full conviction that at last one day they will have to return to their Lord.

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٥)<sup>5</sup>

These words are also part of the supplication mentioned above. Here the word فِتْنَةً means “targets of trial” and refers to the hardships inflicted by the disbelievers on the Muslims. The implication of this supplication of the Muslims is: Lord! We have declared this acquittal and enmity against these Idolaters out of our sense of honour for Your *tawhīd*; we are fully ready to face whatever now emanates from them; do not give them so much respite that they make us the targets of their oppression and cruelty.

The words رَبَّنَا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا imply: Lord! Forgive our weaknesses and our sins. Our sins should not become the cause to make us so weak as to provide an opportunity to our enemies to oppress us.

Hidden in the above sentence of supplication is the acknowledgement that if any trial is faced by the Muslims, it will be as a result of their own misdeeds; since God has authority over everything, they beg Him to forgive them and to protect them from such trials.

The words أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ signify one's total resignation to God. He is powerful and can do anything He wants to; no one can stop Him; at the same time, He is wise as well. All His works are based on wisdom and hence Muslims submit all their affairs to Him; whatever He does encompasses good and is based on wisdom and expediency.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ (٦)<sup>6</sup>

These words are a permutative (*badl*) from the words قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ of verse four. What is implied is that indeed for them the best example to follow in this matter is found in the declaration of acquittal made by Abraham (sws) and his companions; however, not every slave to his desires is able to follow such an example. Only those people have the courage to embark upon this job who also hope to receive God's help and also hope for the Hereafter to materialize. People who do not have full conviction in these two things cannot undertake this task. In other

5. Lord! Do not make us the targets of evil-doing of these disbelievers. And our Lord! Forgive us, Lord. Indeed, You are the Mighty, the Wise One.

6. Indeed, there is a good example in them for you. For those who put expect [to meet] God and [see] the Last Day. And those who evade should know that God is self-sufficient and has all worthy attributes.

words, giving up one's house, wealth, assets, country and nation is only possible for those who at every step of this journey are hopeful of receiving God's help and whose real reliance is not on their wealth and assets but on the blessings and rewards of the Hereafter. This verse fully explains the real provision a person must have for such a migration, and also explains the real cause of the weaknesses which were showed by certain people in this phase.

The words *وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ* sound a warning to these people. The real path of success is that they should follow the example set by Abraham (sws) and his companions; otherwise they should remember God least cares about those who evade this path. He is not dependent on or in need of anyone. He is totally self-sufficient and has all worthy attributes. His kingdom is not running through the help of others; it is run by Him alone.

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٧)<sup>7</sup>

Expressed in this verse are great glad tidings for Muslims: if today they show courage to declare their enmity with these relatives, they should know that this enmity will not remain forever; there is a possibility that the Almighty change it into friendship, and their enemies of today ultimately embrace Islam and become warm friends.

The section *وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* refers to the fact that the Almighty has power over all things; if He wants He can turn foes who are after the lives of people into their warm friends. He is forgiving and merciful: He does not find excuses to inflict people with torment; He in fact tries to find excuses to forgive them. One should not think that the most die-hard of His enemies will always remain His enemies; it might well be that with the mercy of God they too are able to see the light of faith.

The attributes *غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* also contain an element of glad tidings in them: if after this admonition, people who as yet have clandestine ties with the enemies of God realize their folly and reform their state of affairs, then God is forgiving and merciful; He will forgo their faults.

The glad tidings of the acceptance of faith by the people of Makkah found in this verse has a specific psychological reason which needs to be kept in consideration: when these people saw that when many of their brothers and sisters and close relatives were leaving them and also forsaking their wealth and assets and their families merely for the cause of religion, they concluded that countering the call of this faith with

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7. It may well be that God will instil friendship between you and your enemies. God is forgiving and merciful.

oppression and tyranny is not the right way and that they should assess their own attitude in this regard.

I have perhaps mentioned in this *tafsīr* or in some other book of mine that the thing which initially inclined the hearts of ‘Umar (rta) to Islam was the migration of some oppressed men and women to Abyssinia. This migration had effected every sensitive man and woman. Thus, it was as a result of this migration that the rate of conversion to Islam greatly increased. It was essential to keep the rate of this conversion on its natural pace so that no one among the emigrants express his or her weakness before the people of Makkah. If anyone of them had expressed this weakness before them, then the people of Makkah would have thought that though Muslims have migrated from them yet they are regretting their step and want to initiate friendly ties with them. This would have weakened the impulse in them to come closer to Islam and would have also weakened the morale of the Muslims stranded in Makkah. For this reason, the Qur’ān sternly chided Muslims on this weakness and warned them to not advance friendly ties with the enemies of Islam. If they make friends with those soiled with the filth of disbelief, they themselves will be doomed. However, if they persist in showing animosity with their relatives of Makkah, it might well be that the Almighty shows them the light of faith and makes them their friends. Consequently, these glad tidings materialized and people saw multitudes entering the folds of Islam, as is depicted in the Qur’ānic verse: **وَرَأَيْتَ** النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا (١١٠:٢) (and you see men embrace the religion of God in multitudes, (110:2).

## Section II: Verses (8-9)

In the succeeding verses, it is clarified that what is being prohibited is friendship with those who have driven out Muslims from their homes or helped others in turning them out. Those who have not committed such excesses are not the addressees of this directive. They must be treated justly and in a befitting manner.

Some people are of the opinion that these verses were revealed later when after complying with this directive Muslims adopted an unbalanced attitude with the disbelievers. In my opinion, such a supposition is not required. It is evident that the above-mentioned verses address Muslims who were desirous of persisting with their ties with the people of Makkah. They could have simultaneously been told both these things: advancing ties of friendship with die-hard enemies of God is against the spirit of faith which they lay claim to; however, those of them

who are not hostile must be dealt by them with justice and fairness and this would be befitting for them.

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ  
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (٨) إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي  
الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ  
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٩)

God does not forbid you to be kind and just to those who have neither waged war against you in the matter of religion nor driven you from your homes. God loves the just. (8)

God only forbids you to make friends with those who have fought against you on account of your religion and driven you from your homes or helped in driving you out. And those who make friends with such people will only wrong their own souls. (9)

### Explanation

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ  
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (٨)<sup>8</sup>

Research on the word <sup>٨</sup>بر has already presented in Sūrah Baqarah.<sup>9</sup> It means “keeping regard of blood relations, fulfilling obligations and doing a favour”. The word إقسط means “justice and fairness” ie. giving the rightful his due right and not take away anything from it.

The verse لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ (do not befriend enemies of Mine and yours) says that the directive given to the Muslims did not mean that they do not be even fair and just to those who did not fight them regarding religion or drove them out of their homes. What is being forbidden is friendship and not justice, as the succeeding verse will clarify. Also, this prohibition does not relate to all the disbelievers; it relates only to those among them who fought with the Muslims because of religion and drove them out of their homes.

The war mentioned in the verse is qualified by the word “religion”. The implication is that the battle and war implied here are not the ones which

8. God does not forbid you to be kind and just to those who have neither waged war against you in the matter of religion nor driven you from your homes. Indeed, God loves the just.

9. Amīn Ahsan Işlāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 1, 143-144.

result because of a clash between national or family interest; it only refers to wars which the disbelievers engaged in only to show their opposition to religion and to stop people from worshipping the one and only God. Religion is the common asset of every person of faith, and on it depends his salvation and success. Therefore a person who befriends those who are enemies of religion is someone who is untruthful in his claim to faith.

The words *إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ* (Indeed God loves the just) encourage the just. Here a question arises: When in the afore-mentioned verse both *بِرٍّ* (keeping regard of blood relations) and *قِسْطٍ* (justice) are mentioned, it was appropriate that the doers of both these virtues be encouraged. Why was only those who dispensed justice were regarded to be dear to God? In my opinion, the answer to this question is that virtues which belong to the genre of keeping regard of blood relations are not as difficult as virtues which belong to the genre of justice and fairness, specially when they relate to the disbelievers. Supporting the weak, helping the poor and treating parents with kindness is not a difficult task. Human nature contains strong urges and motives for such virtues; however, to fulfil the obligation of being just and fair and that too with one's enemies is no easy a task. For this reason, the Almighty has bestowed a special status to such people by stating that He holds such people dear to Him. It also needs to be kept in mind that fulfilling the obligation of justice and fairness is one of the primary objectives for which this *ummah* was instituted. Those who are equally just to both friend and foe are in fact its cream and the dear to God. Unless a person fulfils this obligation, all his other virtues become ineffective.

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٩)<sup>10</sup>

Stated in this verse is exactly what Muslims are stopped from and with regard to whom. Making friends here obviously refers to friendship and co-operation with such people against the interest of the Muslim *ummah* so that these people can become a means of fulfilling some individual need of the Muslims who want to befriend them.

A deliberation on this verse will show that the whole emphasis is on the words *أَن تَوَلَّوهُمْ*. This means that what is prohibited is to make friends with the disbelievers; being just and virtuous to them is not prohibited.

10. God only forbids you to make friends with those who have fought against you on account of your religion and driven you from your homes or helped in driving you out. And those who make friends with such people will only wrong their own souls.

Being virtuous is a one-sided act. It does not depend on the attitude of the person to whom a person is being virtuous. If a person is in need, then it is our moral obligation to help him whether he is a believer or a disbeliever, and it is essential that in this regard we do not be desirous of any expression of gratitude from them in return. The words of Sūrah Dahr are: (٩:٧٦) *إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا* (we feed you for God's sake only; we seek of you neither recompense nor gratitude, (76:9)). Even if because of some reason we feel enmity for them, the correct attitude for us is still to be virtuous to them. In such cases, showing virtue to them will earn us more rewards, as is specified by the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.

As far as justice and fairness are concerned, they are based on law, contract and custom. No discrimination can be made in this regard between a believer and a disbeliever or a friend and a foe. The requisite of law and contract shall always be fulfilled; it does not matter whether the issue relates to a friend or an enemy. In the succeeding verses, one can see how the Qur'ān has decided some disputes regarding the disbelievers of the Quraysh and how important a judgement it has made. Moreover, it has emphatically directed Muslims to follow this directive.

The words *وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ* imply that Muslims who even after this warning sustain friendly ties with these disbelievers should remember that they will neither be able to harm God in any way nor the cause of Islam; they will in fact be wronging their own souls.

### Section III: Verses (10-13)

In the subsequent verses, Muslims are first directed in the light of the first verse of this *sūrah* that they should assess and evaluate the existence and extent of faith in the Muslim women who migrate to them. They must not be included in the ranks of the Muslims merely because they have migrated to them and want to be among them. If it is proven after evaluation that their migration is really for the cause of religion, only then should they be accepted. Similarly, it is not allowed to the immigrants to continue to keep in wedlock their wives who are disbelievers and who reside in Makkah. They should be given the freedom to marry whomever they want to and their dowers should be mutually exchanged.

The second directive was given to the Prophet (sws): he should take a pledge from them to follow all the customs and conventions of the religious life stipulated by Islam. Only if they commit to this condition should this pledge be taken from them. Not every type of person is



worthy of being included in an Islamic society. Only those have this right who promise to fulfil the requisites of the Islamic faith.

These directives are primarily given to tell the Muslims that Islam and other religions cannot co-exist. Such an amalgamation is against sense and reason. The purity of Islam should be maintained in every sector of human relationship so that no stint of hypocrisy creeps in. Just as it is not allowed to the Muslims to make friends with the enemies of God and His Prophet, it is also not allowed to them to keep idolatrous women in their wedlock. If such a relationship has existed till now, the time has now arrived to sever it; however, this very issue also entailed that another dispute be settled between the Muslims and the Quraysh which continued to exist between them ever since the truce of Ḥudaybiyah, and now had assumed such a proportion that it had to be settled.

One of the important statutes of this peace treaty was that if anyone from the Quraysh would defect to the Muslims even though he be a Muslim, the Muslims would be bound to return him to the Quraysh. On other hand, if a Muslim defects to the Quraysh, the latter would not be required to return him. Although there is a difference of opinion between the narrators regarding the words of this statute however the words reported by ‘Urwah, al-Daḥḥāk, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd, al-Zuhrī, Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān are: لَا يَأْتِيكَ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ عَلَى دِينِكَ إِلَّا رَدَدْتَهُ إِلَيْنَا (this peace treaty is concluded on the condition that if anyone from us [—the Quraysh—] whether he is a follower of your [—Muḥammad’s—] religion defects to you, then you shall necessarily return him).<sup>11</sup>

This statute was accepted by the Muslims as far as men were concerned. Consequently while complying with it Abū Jandal (rta) was returned to the Quraysh in very emotional circumstances. This happened right after the treaty had been concluded. However, in the case of women, the Muslims had not clearly accepted this statute, and anyone who is aware of Arabic cannot deny the fact that these words are not explicit regarding returning women who defected to the Muslims.

The text of the contract cited above has the word أَحَدٌ (anyone) which though can be used generally for both genders, yet all the pronouns and verbs which succeed it are masculine. In such a situation, a person can claim that that women are also connoted in أَحَدٌ in general but yet no sensible person can claim that these words are as specific for women as they are for men. In fact, what can be said is that if either of the parties wanted to categorically include women in this statute then some more qualifying words like ذَكَرَ كَانَ أَوْ أُنْثَى (whether man or woman) should have

11. Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), 1532.

been added after أَحَدٌ. However, since no such qualifying words were added even though the nature of the contract entailed such an addition, then this obviously means that at the time of making this contract both parties did not have women in their minds.

This brevity in the contract naturally resulted in a dispute between the Muslims and the Quraysh, and it seems that the dispute assumed great importance during the time of revelation of this sūrah. This was because many women also migrated to Madīnah and it became essential that Muslims adopt a definite policy in this regard. Thus the Almighty revealed a definite directive in this regard, and also specified: ذَلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَخْجُكُم بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (this is the decision of God which He is delivering among you; and God is all-knowing and wise). Readers may now proceed to study these verse in the light of this background.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَاِمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَأَتَوْهُنَّ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكُوفِرِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلَيْسَ أَلَا مَا أَنْفَقُوا ذَلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَخْجُكُم بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (١٠) وَإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَقَبْتُمْ فَاتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ (١١) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعُهُنَّ وَاسْتَعْفِر لَّهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (١٢) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ (١٣)

Believers! When believing women seek refuge with you, evaluate them. God already is fully aware of their faith. So if you find them to be true believers, do not return them to the disbelievers; neither are they lawful for the disbelievers, nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. And hand back to the disbelievers what they have spent. Nor is it an offence for you to marry such women, provided you give them their dowers. And do not continue with your marriages with disbelieving women: and demand what you have spent and let the disbelievers also demand what they spent. This is the decision of God which He is making among you. And God is all-knowing and wise. (10)

And if any portion of your wives' dowers remains with the disbelievers, then whenever you have the opportunity pay those who wives have left them whatever they have spent on them. And fear God in whom you have professed faith. (11)

Prophet! When believing women come to you and pledge themselves to serve no other deity besides God, to commit neither theft, nor adultery, nor child-murder, nor utter any false allegation related to what is between their hands and feet and will not disobey you in what is according to the norms, accept their allegiance and implore God to forgive them. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful. (12)

Believers! Do not make friends with those who have incurred the wrath of God. Such people despair of the life to come, just as the disbelievers despair of the buried dead. (13)

### Explanation

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَأَمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَآتُوهُنَّ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكُوفَرِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلَيْسَ أَلَا مَا أَنْفَقُوا ذَلِكَمُ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ<sup>(١٠)</sup><sup>12</sup>

Muslims are told that though they are not responsible to return women who migrate to them, as mentioned earlier; however; their faith must be assessed and evaluated, and without this process they must not be accepted in their community. It should be fully assessed whether their migration is for Islam or for some other reason. If the assessment shows that their migration is because of Islam, then it is not lawful to return them; however, if the result of this evaluation is otherwise, then retaining these women is also not lawful. The reason for this is that the Islamic society is a place for pious men and women; it is not a place for ignoble

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12. Believers! When believing women seek refuge with you, evaluate them. God already is fully aware of their faith. So if you find them to be true believers, do not return them to the disbelievers; neither are they lawful for the disbelievers, nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. And hand back to the disbelievers what they have spent. Nor is it an offence for you to marry such women, provided you give them their dowers. And do not continue with your marriages with disbelieving women: and demand what you have spent and let the disbelievers also demand what they spent. This is the decision of God which He is making among you. And God is all-knowing and wise.

men and women.

The nature of this evaluation is evident from a narrative of Ibn ‘Abbās, narrated thus:

سئل بن عباس كيف كان امتحان رسول الله النساء قال كان يمتحنهن بالله ما خرجت من بغض زوج وبالله ما خرجت رغبة عن أرض إلى أرض وبالله ما خرجت التماس دنيا وبالله ما خرجت إلا حبا لله ورسوله

Ibn ‘Abbās was asked: “How did the Prophet (sws) assess women?” He answered: “He would ask them to swear that they have not come because of being displeased with their husbands and swear that they have not come merely because they wanted to change their place and swear that no worldly motive was behind this and swear that they have come only because of their love for God and His Prophet.”<sup>13</sup>

The words *اللَّهُ أَغْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ* form a parenthetical sentence. The implication is that Muslims should try to assess these women by taking oaths from them and by other means and sources. As far as the reality in this regard is concerned, the Almighty fully knows it. If in spite of trying, Muslims are not able to get to the truth in this matter, then they have a legitimate excuse before God, and if these women try to deceive them regarding their faith, then they should know that the Almighty is fully aware of the extent of their faith or lack of it.

The words *فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ* says that if through available means of assessment, it is proved that they are believing women, then they must not be returned to the disbelievers because neither are they lawful to the disbelievers nor are the disbelievers lawful to them; both are mutually unlawful to one another.

With this directive, the Qur’ān once and for all decided the dispute which had arisen about a statute of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, and a little deliberation will show that this verdict was very fair. Had the verdict of the Qur’ān been that as per the treaty Muslims were not bound to return any woman, it would not have been unfair; however, this could have been regarded as an act of purely taking advantage of the words of the treaty. The Qur’ān did not merely take advantage of the words of the treaty, it also gave a verdict based on very sound intellectual and moral basis: it did direct the Muslims to return women who did not migrate for the cause of God and His Prophet (sws) but did so because of some trivial worldly purpose; however, it did not allow those of them to be

13. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, vol. 28, 67.

returned who were proven as believers. This is so principle a statement that no sensible person can refute it. A person is equipped with moral and intellectual sensitivity and it is an obvious injustice to him if he is forced to live in a society where his moral and intellectual identity is not safe.

The words وَأَتَوْهُم مَّا أَنْفَقُوا depict another verdict given by the Qur'ān. If any of the believing woman who is detained has remained in the wedlock of a disbeliever, then it is the responsibility of the Muslims to pay back to her husband the dower he had paid her. The public treasury should be utilized for this purpose. Though the words are general in their connotation, yet since it is the dower which comes in question in case of separation between the spouses, it is the dower which is implied as per this concomitant indication.

The words وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ imply that once all these stages pass, if a Muslim wants to marry them, he can do so without any hesitation on the condition that he pays the dower. In other words, he will be liable to pay back the dower paid by the former husband and then to pay a fresh dower to the woman he wants to marry.

The words لَا جُنَاحَ are meant to express the fact that a woman who has in this manner become part of the Muslim society can re-marry someone here; the fact that she is in the wedlock of a disbeliever in a *dār al-kufr* or she requires permission from her husband or guardians for marriage cannot hinder this marriage. She is now free of the restraints of her disbelieving husband and relatives, and can exercise her free will within the limits of the *sharī'ah*.

Consider next the words وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكُوفِرِ. The word عِصَم is the plural of عِصَة. In this regard, another generous step was taken by Islam and taken absolutely one-sidedly: Muslims were directed to release from wedlock their wives who were disbelievers and were living in the *dār al-kufr*. They should let them go so that they can marry anyone they wanted to.

After this declaration, the situation that arose is mentioned thus: وَأَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلَيْسَ أَلَا مَا أَنْفَقُوا. Believing women who had come to the Muslims no longer remained in the wedlock of their disbelieving husbands, and women who were in the wedlock of Muslims but adhere to disbelief or resided in Makkah no longer remained in the wedlock of their Muslim husbands. As far as their dowers were concerned, they should be mutually exchanged: The dowers given by Muslims to their disbelieving wives will be returned to them by the disbelievers, and the dowers given by the disbelievers to their wives who had become Muslims, will be returned to the disbelievers by the Muslims.

The final words ذَلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَخْصُكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ of the verse

clarify that this is the verdict of the Qur'an on the dispute which had arisen between the Quraysh and the Muslims in the interpretation of a statute of the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah regarding returning women. It is evident from this verdict that the Qur'an did not accept the demand of the Quraysh that as per the terms of the treaty it was mandatory on the Muslims to return Muslim women who migrated to them. The verdict it gave was just and fair as well as comprehensive which solved a great social dilemma of that time, and also closed the doors to any imminent dispute. Since God is Knowing and Wise, His servants should trust in Him in His verdicts.

وَإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقِبْتُمْ فَاتُّوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ <sup>14</sup> (١١)

The word عَاقِبْتُمْ means صَارَتْ الْعُقْبَى لَكُمْ ie. "then came your turn or you were given the opportunity".

This verse informs Muslims what to do if a situation arises in which the disbelievers violate the previously outlined procedure of mutually exchanging dowers. In other words, if they do not return the dower of a woman which was given to her by her Muslim husband, then in this case it would be rightful of the Muslims that if they have to pay the dower of woman to the disbelievers, then instead of paying it to them, he should pay to his fellow Muslim who has not been paid the dower of his wife which he has released from his wedlock. This is a fair measure of retaliation suggested by the Qur'an and was allowed by it because of the parties was being unjust.

The words caution the Muslims from benefitting from this permission. Muslims should fear God in whom they have professed faith in even while dealing with their enemies. They should not look for excuses for this retaliatory measure without any sound reason nor should they try to benefit more than what is their due.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْنَهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ <sup>15</sup> (١٢)

14. And if any portion of your wives' dowers remains with the disbelievers, then whenever you have the opportunity pay those who wives have left them whatever they have spent on them. And fear God in whom you have professed faith.

15. Prophet! When believing women come to you and pledge themselves to

Just as the Muslims were directed to assess the extent of faith of the women who had migrated to them, they are directed in this verse to not accept any woman in their ranks who come over to them to embrace Islam. A pledge should be sought from them to obey all the good enjoined by Islam and to promise to specially refrain from all the sins which are rampant in the *jāhilliyah* society so that the germs of these sins do not spread in the Islamic society.

Here, it must be kept in mind that this directive was given in the time when like men, women too were coming to the Prophet (sws) to pledge Islam in multitudes, and many of these women belonged to the morally decrepit sections of the society in the time of *jāhilliyah*. Such a situation entailed that they be specially asked to refrain from sins so that they are informed of the characteristics of the new society they are entering into, and they enter it with the will to change themselves. The sins from which the Prophet (sws) has been directed to seek a pledge from are the following.

The first of them is that they will not associate anyone with God: *أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا*. The foundation of the whole religion is the pure belief of monotheism. For this very reason, the first directive given was to ask them to give their word that they will refrain from polytheism. For an average mind, the path to monotheism opens by denouncing polytheism. If a comprehension of safeguarding one self from polytheism does not exist, then many people claim to be adherents of pure monotheism in spite of being incriminated with all the practices of polytheism.

The second of them is that they should not steal: *وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ*. In other words, just as it is wrong to infringe upon the rights of God, it is equally wrong and forbidden to infringe upon the rights of human beings.

The third of these directives is that they should not commit adultery: *وَلَا يَزْنِينَ*. I have been referring to the similarity between adultery and polytheism at many places of this *tafsīr*. Repetition thus is not required here.

The fourth directive is that they will not kill their children: *وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ*. In the age of *jāhilliyah*, children were killed not only because of polytheistic superstitions, but also because of poverty and an ill sense of honour. In this age, other motives of infanticide have arisen and are well-known. This prohibition embraces all these cases.

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serve no other deity besides God, to commit neither theft, nor adultery, nor child-murder, nor utter any false allegation related to what is between their hands and feet and will not disobey you in what is according to the norms, accept their allegiance and implore God to forgive them. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.

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The fifth directive is that they will not falsely blame either a man or a woman regarding anything which is between the hands and the feet: وَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّ بِهِمَا نَ يَفْتَرِيَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ. In my opinion, these words refer to the sexual organs. These organs are located between the hands and the feet. This is a very polite style to refer to them. It camouflages what is said yet comprehensively covers every detail. In a very decent manner, it alludes to all the accusations which relate to sex like adultery and sexual advances like kissing and fondling.

To falsely accuse someone is a very grave matter; however, if an accusation relates to sexual issues, its severity increases manifold. This is because such an accusation is a dangerous attack on the repute and character of a person. Such an attitude may result in rows and trying situations which at times cannot be curbed. Whether such an accusation is made by a man or a woman, it is a great sin for both and the *sharī'ah* has regarded it to be a crime for both. Here, however, women have been particularly stopped from indulging in it because a sexual accusation by a woman is a very grave attack against which defence is extremely difficult.

Our exegetes have generally interpreted these words to mean that a woman should not attribute her pregnancy caused by some other man to her husband. I cannot understand the reason for limiting the sphere of these words. I have interpreted them in a wider sense above so that their sphere of application include everything which should come under them.

The sixth directive is that they will not disobey the Prophet (sws) in any *ma'rūf*: وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ. The word مَعْرُوف (*ma'rūf*) occurs in contrast to the word مُنْكَر (*munkar*). All the previously mentioned things relate to what is *munkar*. They do not relate to what is *ma'rūf* like the prayer, the fast, the *hajj* and justice and fairness. The reason for this, as is alluded to before, is that the verse mentions the women from whom this pledge is to be taken who are entering the folds of Islam in large numbers after the conquest of Makkah and who were incriminated with the sins mentioned here which were rampant in the age of *jāhiliyyah*. This special situation entailed that the pledge of refraining from the *munkarāt* (plural of *munkar*) be taken from them in detail while the pledge to adhere to the *ma'rūfāt* (plural of *ma'rūf*) be taken in a general manner that they will not disobey that Prophet (sws) in any of the *ma'rūfāt* of the *sharī'ah*. The *ma'rūfāt* of the *sharī'ah* are well known and hence require no detail here.

Some people have interpreted the words فِي مَعْرُوفٍ as a conditional phrase and infer from this that in Islam obedience to even the Prophet (sws) is conditional to what is *ma'rūf* what to speak of others. In my opinion this inference is far fetched. A prophet neither directs his people



to do anything *munkar* nor is he capable of doing it. He always directs people to do what is *ma'rūf* in religion because he is constantly under divine protection, and his status is that of a barometer which distinguishes good from evil because of which obeying him is an essential requisite of faith. When he himself is the barometer of what is *ma'rūf* and what is *munkar*, how can anyone else regard a thing which emanates from him to be against *ma'rūf*. The only condition that can be imposed on pledging a covenant at the hands of the Prophet (sws) is that of one's strength and capacity, and it is evident from certain narratives that the Prophet (sws) would remind people of this condition and have it imposed. However, imposing the condition of *ma'rūf* is absolutely meaningless in this case. Nevertheless, the pledge made at the hands of the Companions and successors of the Prophet (sws) shall be conditional to *ma'rūf* because there is a chance in their case that they give a directive which is against the *ma'rūf*. Consequently, after the Prophet (sws) no one has the right to take a pledge of absolute obedience from people.

The manner in which the Prophet (sws) took this pledge from women is mentioned in the narratives. It can have various forms which are recorded in them. What is absolutely evident from them is that the Prophet (sws) never took their hands in his own when he was taking this pledge.

The words *وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* direct the Prophet (sws) to enter into this covenant with women who pledge to refrain from all these *munkarāt* and to adhere to all the *ma'rūfāt* and that he should seek God's forgiveness so that any previous blemishes are forgiven by Him. This is because He is Forgiving and Merciful; He will have mercy on them.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ (١٣)<sup>16</sup>

In this final verse, the same subject with which the *sūrah* began is once again referred to. There exist several examples in the Qur'ān in which a *sūrah* ends on the same subject as the one with which it commenced. This fact in itself is a great argument for the existence of coherence in the Qur'ān.

The first verse began with the words: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ* (Believers! Do not befriend those who are enemies of Mine and yours). The Jews as well as the Idolaters were the enemies of God. The *musabbiḥāt sūrahs* which have preceded this *sūrah* mention

16. Believers! Do not make friends with those who have incurred the wrath of God. Such people despair of the life to come, just as the disbelievers despair of the buried dead.

mostly the conspiracies of the Jews and their compatriots, and Muslims have been directed to stay away from them. Now, in this final verse, Muslims are warned that friendship neither with the Jews nor with the Idolaters can be of any good to them. Both these denominations are of the same level as far as their beliefs and practices are concerned, and are going to meet the same fate as well. Whoever becomes their compatriot will also be devastated the way they will be.

The words قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ obviously can only refer to the Jews. The attribute they mention is used for only them by the Qur'ān. Thus, in Sūrah Fātiḥah, the very first sūrah, the words are: الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ (those who have incurred the wrath of God).

The words قَدْ يَتُوسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ imply that though these Jews acknowledge the Hereafter, however their infatuation for worldly pleasures, their greed for wealth and their escapism from death all bear witness that they do not expect the Hereafter to happen. Had they expected the Hereafter to come, they would never have indulged in practices in which they are now indulging in, and did not desist from it in spite of severe warnings from God.

The words كَمَا يَتَّسِ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ refer to the fact that just as the Idolaters do not expect their dead to rise from their graves and say: أَيْدًا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ (3:50) (when we are dead and turned to dust? Such a return is most-improbable! (50:3)), in a similar manner, these Jews also do not expect the Hereafter to come. Both are at the same level of expectancy as far as the Hereafter is concerned. It needs to be kept in mind that at many places, the Qur'ān has brought to the fore the similarity between these two religious groups so that the misconception in which Muslims are in because of regarding the Jews to be the People of the Book is dispelled, and their optimism about them is removed and it becomes evident to them that each is worse than the other.

With the grace of God, with these words I come to the end of this *tafsīr*. وَ لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأَوَّلَى وَالْآخِرَةِ (all gratitude be to God from the beginning to the end).

Rahmānābād

4<sup>th</sup> March 1978 AD

23<sup>rd</sup> Rabī' al-Awwal 1398 AH